

PUBLIC MANAGEMENT INSIGHT BRIEF

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The Changing State Agency Landscape 2016-2019

The Institute of Public Administration has been tracking changes in state agencies since 2005¹. Over that period, there have been dramatic changes in the number and type of state agency.

A review of changes between 2010 and 2015 found that more than 60 national non-commercial agencies were abolished over that period, with 25 new agencies created over the same time². This was during the period after the financial crisis when there was an emphasis on rationalising the number and type of state agencies.

A new review looking at changes in the national non-commercial agency landscape between 2016 and 2019 found a slight increase in the number of agencies, following the fall between 2010 and 2015. Nine new national non-commercial agencies were created between 2016 and mid-2019. Eight of these are completely new, and one – the Financial Services and Pensions Ombudsman – a merger of two previous agencies. The eight new agencies are:

- Climate Change Advisory Council
- Home Building Finance Ireland
- Office of the Planning Regulator
- An Fórum Uisce/The Water Forum
- Legal Services Regulatory Authority
- Policing Authority
- National Shared Services Office
- Oberstown Children Detention Campus

Only one agency was terminated between 2016 and mid-2019 - ReBo – the Credit Union Restructuring Board. And as mentioned above, the Financial Services and Pensions Ombudsman was created from the merger of the Financial Services Ombudsman and the Pensions Ombudsman, which ceased to exist as separate entities.

A small number of other agencies had some functional or name changes. For example, the Commission for Energy Regulation became the Commission for Regulation of Utilities. The Railway Safety Commission became the Commission for Railway Regulation. Irish Water Safety was re-named Water Safety Ireland.

As at mid-2019, there were 258 national non-commercial agencies operating in Ireland.

1. McGauran, A-M., Verhoest, K. & Humphreys, P. (2005) The Corporate Governance of Agencies in Ireland: Non-commercial National Agencies. Committee for Public Management Research Report No.6. Dublin: Institute of Public Administration.
2. Boyle, R. (2016) Review of National Non-commercial State Agencies in Ireland: 2010-2015. Dublin: Institute of Public Administration.
https://www.ipa.ie/fileUpload/Documents/StateAgencies_Review.pdf

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